(a) what is the policy and procedure followed for allotment of bookstalls at platforms/stations on Indian Railways;

(b) what is the policy for appointment of vendors, stall keepers and agents at bookstalls on Indian Railways;

(c) whether any agreement is executed with the vendors, stall keepers and agents by the appointing authority at the time of their appointment on Indian Railways; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Allotment of bookstall is done by the zonal Railways after inviting applications from the eligible categories *viz.* unemployed graduates, their co-operatives, partnerships associations and co-operative societies of actual workers and vendors. Selection is made by a committee of officers as per prescribed procedure and guidelines. However, in case of M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co., M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. and Philanthropic societies/religious organisation allotment is done at the level of Railway Board on recommendation of zonal Railways.

(b) to (d) Appointment of vendors, stall keepers and agents of bookstalls is done by the bookstall licensees themselves under their own terms and conditions. Railways enter into an agreement with the licensees only and no agreement is executed with the vendors, stalls keepers, agents etc.

Rail Accidents

742. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Railway accidents that have taken place during the current year, so far;

(b) whether inquiries have been held into each accident; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The number of consequential train accidents during the current calendar year upto 10-07-2000 is 251.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Inquiry is held into each accident either by Railway Officers or in case of serious accidents by Commissioner of Railway Safety. Out of the 251 accidents, 14 cases have been entrusted to Commissioner of Railway safety and the remaining have been inquired into by committees of Railway Officers.

Land acquisition for the East Coast Railway Zone

743. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the East Coast Railway Zone has not become fully functional;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether land acquisition for the Zone has been completed;

(d) what are the requisite norms required to make that Railway Zone fully functional; and

(e) the details of steps taken to fulfil those norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In view of the financial resource crunch being faced by the Railways, the issue of creation of new Zones is presently under review.

(c) Yes, Sir. However, an individual has claimed that the Land given by State Government on lease to Railway belongs to him. A court case is pending in this regard.

(d) and (e) The essential requirements for making the Zone fully functional include the complete development of infrastructure, deployment of staff and officers alongwith finalization of jurisdiction under a separate General Manager. However, as mentioned at (b) above, the entire issue of reorganisation is presently under review.